

## **EAST SUSSEX LINK**

The County's Local Involvement Network in Health and Social Care

### **LINK FAQ**

#### **WHAT IS A LINK?**

A Local Involvement Network (LINK) is a network of local individuals, groups and organisations, with an interest in health and social care services. The LINK will collect and represent the views and ideas of the community, in how health and social care services are planned and run in the local area.

#### **HOW IS A LINK RUN?**

The local authority will appoint a 'host' organisation to support the LINK with its activities. This host has the responsibility for carrying out the administration, keeping the records, managing the budget, and maintaining the LINK as a network of individuals and groups with an interest in health and social care.

There is no set structure for the LINK to develop, and although guidance has been published by the Department of Health, it is unlikely any two LINKs will be run in the same way.

The wider LINK will elect a 'Core Group' to steer what, when and how the LINK carries out its activities, and they will also produce the work plan. This LINK work plan will be directed by the issues, concerns and questions being raised by individuals, groups and organisations in the community.

#### **WHAT WILL THE LINK DO?**

A LINK will:

- give people the chance to tell health and social care providers what they think about their local care services - what is working well and what needs improving
- give people the chance to check up on how health and social care services are planned and run, and register any concerns
- make reports and recommendations and get a reply within a set period of time
- ask for information and get answers in a set period of time
- enter and view premises where services and care are provided, and see if services are working well
- refer issues to the local 'Overview and Scrutiny Committee' if it seems action is not being taken

#### **An example**

A number of people raise the issue of doctors' surgery opening hours with a LINK. Doctors at the local surgery say they want to open during the evening and at weekends, but they have limited resources.

The LINK offers to help the surgery find out the hours that will best suit local people, by asking the community for their views.

The LINK's research finds that those who work would prefer more early morning appointments, so they can see a GP but not be late for work.

As a result, the GPs decide the surgery will close one afternoon a week, so that they can open for more early morning appointments. They also start a call-back service, so people can have quick telephone consultations – this was a direct recommendation of the LINK.

## **BE PART OF A LINK:**

There are a number of benefits of being part of a LINK, which include:

- Influencing those who make decisions about our existing services
- Helping the community speak with a stronger local voice
- Helping services improve and provide better care

## **WHO CAN JOIN?**

Anyone can join: carers, service users, community leaders, patient representatives, charities, faith groups, tenant organisations, youth groups, businesses.....anyone who wants to make sure the needs of the community are listened to.

## **HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE?**

It's up to you how and when you get involved - you can just comment on issues when contacted or you can get more involved – by helping to raise awareness of an issue or by helping to find solutions (for example - meeting providers or being part of a working group).

You can take a few minutes to answer a survey or take longer to represent the community when a health or social care service is being discussed with service providers.

## **HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?**

Contact East Sussex LINK via the Host Organisation (East Sussex Disability Association):

**Post:** East Sussex LINK, 1 Faraday Close, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 9BH

**Email:** [info@thecountylink.net](mailto:info@thecountylink.net)

**Tel:** 01323 514510

**Text:** 07968 119806

**Web:** [www.thecountylink.net](http://www.thecountylink.net)